



VISION 2020 FISCAL RESOURCES TASK GROUP
Meeting Minutes 7:30 PM 10_19_17

Senior Center First Floor Conference Room

ATTENDEES: Gordon Jamieson (Co-Chair), David Gabarino (Co-Chair), Heather Remoff, Pete Howard (Secretary)

INITIAL DISCUSSION

Heather showed an Advocate article from last year showing several real estate sales of \$6m+ on Dudley St. Gordon discovered using the Assessors online property listing that these properties are assessed at less than \$2m. The properties contain apartment houses for probably 8 apartments each. Heather pointed out that this is a case where the potential value of the land is not included in the assessments. Gordon will draft an email letter to the Assessor urging them to make sure the current reassessment more accurately reflects the fair market value. He will circulate the letter for review by the task group. After the mtg several attendees did a drive by confirmation of the property descriptions. Depending on response to the letter, the group may wish to raise the matter during the annual BoS/BoA tax rate hearing in Dec.

CITIZEN CORNER #5 ENTERPRIZE FUNDS

Gordon provided copies of this article drafted by Pete and edited by Heather & Gordon (Ref 1). Additional improvements were added as shown in Ref 1. Gordon will make a clean version for final review by email and subsequent submission to the Advocate.

TOWN LEADERSHIP INTERVIEWS

Gordon provided copies of Heather's draft of interview questions. Members adjusted the order of questions and added some (Ref 2). David suggested that these interviews should show how the leaders handle fiscal administration. Gordon wants them to familiarize residents w/ key Town government leaders. Gordon will make a clean copy, circulate for email review, then send the Town Manager for comment & to arrange an interview. Gordon will ask the Manager how to best get a photo. Pete urged that all interviews include more than one interviewer.

FRTG MEETING GUESTS: Gordon to arrange
Deputy Town Manager Nov or Dec
Treasurer Collector Jan or Feb

Next mtg Nov 16
Meetings monthly - 3rd Thursdays 7:30 PM - Usually in Senior Center

Ref 1 Citizens Corner #5 w/ edit to date
Ref 2 Interview questions w/ edits

Citizens Corner #5

This is article of [concludes](#) the series that [we](#) started last spring on how the Town of [Arlington](#) is organized. Our objective is to improve resident understanding of our local government and how it functions. This [Today's](#) article [column](#) focus on five Town organizational units that are, for the most part, not supported by the real estate tax but [are mostly supported by independent revenues](#). These units provide [business-like](#) services directly to residents and are called Enterprise Funds (EF).

Arlington's Enterprise Funds offer many services that enhance the quality of life and reinforce our Town's commitment to building strong sense of community. Whether it's an afternoon of family fun at the skating rink, attending a special event scheduled in one of the town's many beautiful buildings and parks, making sure our young people have access to mental health support, providing affordable transport to our seniors, or delivering quality water at the turn of the tap, these funds work for Arlington.

Each EF has an account maintained by the Town Treasurer that receives the revenue and pays [for](#) the costs of [each](#) unit's activities. Each EF has a budget approved by Town Meeting. In recent years these budgets have been balanced. Each EF also has a reserve fund that holds any excess revenues [which can be](#) used by the EF in subsequent years. This organizational structure is established under Massachusetts General Law Title XII Chapter 44 Section 53F1/2.

The Water and Sewer EF is [managed](#) by a division of Public Works [under the direction of Director of Public Works and the Town Manager](#). It maintains the fresh water distribution system (130 miles) and the sewer mains (117 miles). ~~(I love this level of detail. Great.)~~ Most of its revenue comes from the water and sewer bills collected by the Treasurer from every residence and business. This EF also pays the water and sewer bills from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) [which provide our purified water supply and process our sewage](#). This EF is by far the largest of the five. ~~(Might it be a good idea to provide contact information?) .. website link? Phone #~~

The Recreation EF is [managed](#) by the Recreation Department under supervision of the Town Manager. It operates, year round, [and provides](#) a large variety of programs hosted in Town buildings and on Town playgrounds. Fees [associated with](#) these programs - [such as parties held at Reservoir Beach](#) - support the fund. This EF maintains, schedules and issues permits to all the properties under the jurisdiction of the Parks & Recreation Commission. ~~(contact information?) website link? Phone #~~

The Ed Burns Sports Center EF is also [managed](#) by the Recreation Department. Fees from club, school and public ice-skating together with the snack bar earnings pay for [the cost of](#) annual operations. The cost of capital expenses [are](#) shared with the Town's Capital Plan on a 50:50 basis. ~~(contact information?) website link? Phone #~~

The Council on Aging Transportation EF is [managed](#) by the Health and Human Services Department. This EF uses its vans to transport elderly residents who lack cars and can't use MBTA busses [to appointments with doctors and errands](#) ~~(??)~~. Both rider fees and grants support this EF. ~~(781-316-3400) ? website link?~~

The Youth Counseling Center EF is also [managed](#) by the Health and Human Services Department. It offers mental health support to youth and their families. Its revenue comes in large part from third party [reimbursements for their services](#). ~~(781-316-3255) ? website link?~~

~ The Vision 2020 Fiscal Resources Task Group embraces and works to help the Town better realize the following Town goal: "We value Arlington's efficient delivery of public services providing for the common good. The benefits from these services and the responsibility of taxation will be equitably distributed among us. We will be known for our sound fiscal planning and for the thoughtful, open process by which realistic choices are made in our Town." We meet monthly and all are welcome to attend.

FRTG Interviews

Name

Title

Office Location

What is the career path that led you to this line of work?

How long have you been in your current job?

You've just met someone who recently moved to Arlington. When they ask what you do, how would you describe your job?

~~What is the career path that led you to this line of work?~~

~~How long have you been in your current job?~~

What aspects of what you do has the greatest impact on the average resident?

What challenges do you face in handling your department's budget?

Tell me about a memorable moment or one that reminded you of the ways in which your department's work makes life better for our residents.

Imagine that you're at a conference of municipal employees. When your counterpart from another state asks you about Arlington, how would you describe our community?

What part of your job brings you the most satisfaction? What do you find most frustrating?

What do you do on your own time?

The Fiscal Resources Task Group is one of the Vision 2020 cluster of volunteer groups designed to give citizens input into community goals for Arlington. What would you hope to see your department achieve by 2020?

The tag line to each interview will explain that earlier articles have described the Town's organization. This series will show key leaders of this organization, especially those with significant fiscal responsibilities.